

Things to consider

As you visit these places consider how they speak to you of:

inclusion

poverty

solidarity

equality

youth

community

exclusion

wealth

discord

inequality

age

isolation

What questions might these pose for Religious Education?

EFTRE 2010: Poverty and Inclusion



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Bruges Tours: Thur 26th Aug

Tour 4

Group 4 meets at the entrance of the **Episcopal Seminary**, in the past it was the abbey of the Cistercian monks who had their former residence near the North Sea. In the 12–13th century these monks built dikes to reclaim sizable strips of land from the sea which they farmed (polders). The refuge of **Ter Doest** was located on this site, on the stretch of water connecting the port city of Bruges with the sea. In 1624 the Abbey of the Dunes took over the **Ter Doest** estate, and thus also the site of the refuge, and immediately chose this as the site on which to erect a completely new abbey. Building got under way in 1628, and the first phase of construction ran until 1642. It is a monumental baroque building that was only completed in the late 18th century. The Abbey of the Dunes was closed down in 1796 and in 1833 was given a new role, as an Episcopal Seminary.

The first stop is the **Peterseliestraat** 136–158. Behind a green gate you will find some '**Godshuizen**'; these Almshouses called "**De Schipjes**" consist of twelve houses built about 1908 thanks to donations from some rich noble families like Baron A. Ruzette. This is one of the 46 sites in Bruges run by the Department of Social Care and Welfare of the municipality.



240 of the houses are for elderly people. These houses in the **Peterseliestraat** were meant for retired fishermen and the dockerworkers of Zeebrugge. The concept of **Godshuizen** goes back to the 14th century. Rich families and guilds built houses for elderly or sick people and for widows. Some of these widows earned money by making the famous Bruges Lace. For the nobility it was an S.O.S. initiative. The aristocratic families built small chapels where the inhabitants could pray for the donators. The current houses are the result of restoration between 1996–2001. The ensemble of brick construction is linked with the historical typology of the construction of the houses on either side of a courtyard situated around a central well. At the street side we find the guard house and a gate incorporated into a wide crenellated façade. Mixing and interpretation of architecture and ornamentation derived from the local XVII and the typical Baroque architecture. In the C19th and C20th there were famous architects who promoted the conservative 'neo-styles' instead of promoting the 'liberal' Jugendstil or Art nouveau. The neo-Baroque statue with the image of Saint Peter, patron of sailors indicates the inhabitants of this courtyard.

Q: How should the poor be treated? Who are the poor?

In the same street you will find the former military hospital. This area will have a new purpose; 80 social houses will be built for people who are not able to buy or rent a house in Bruges.

The entrance of L'ARCHE house is situated in the Snaggaardstraat. The building is a protected monument; it is one of the few timber framed houses in Bruges. The interior of the house is renovated where volunteers and people with special needs live here together. The co-ordinator, Christine, two volunteers and two residents will tell us about their inspiration, their friendships, their work at the farm and their engagements. It is a real and unique occasion to be in touch with this community based on an open spirituality. This community is founded by Jean Vanier, a former Canadian officer.



Q: Could you link their story with concepts as social inclusion, vulnerability, compassion and emancipation?

Q: How would you interpret this logo of the Arche Community?

In the same street you will find a hotel school and the Royal Institute Spermalie. In 1835 Canon Charles Carton, a famous Belgian educator for special education, started the first Institute for children who are blind and deaf. He founded a congregation of nuns to support the children in their education and daily life. The school was located in the former abbey **Spermalie**.

Visiting Paris in 1837 he had a meeting with Louis Braille and later started an exchange about the technique of decapoint developed by Braille. Abbé Carton wanted to have a system that was useful for blind and non-blind people. Carton was very active and started another congregation specialising in lace education for poor girls.

Q: How do we include all our students in the exploration of religion in the world?

Our Lady of the Potterie also provided shelter for the poor, the weak, for destitute travelers and for the sick; the sick being cared for by nuns. Nowadays the old part of the **Potterie** is a museum, but at the rear side there is still an old people's home, now housed in modern buildings. An official guide will tell you more about the heritage of this museum.

